

PS

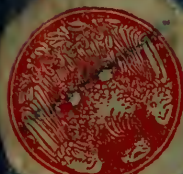
3503

E738M9

1919

MY CHILD

JEAN BERRY





Class PS 3503

Book E738 M9

Copyright No. 1919

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

MY CHILD

MY CHILD

A BOOK OF VERSE

BY
JEAN BERRY



2
2 3 3
6 3
3 3 3
3 3 3

NEW YORK
E. P. DUTTON AND COMPANY
681 FIFTH AVENUE

PS3503
E738M9
1919

COPYRIGHT, 1919,
By E. P. DUTTON AND COMPANY

All Rights Reserved

21

Printed in the United States of America

41.25
APR 28 1919.

©Cl.A515365

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
WHAT IS THIS MARVEL OF MOTHERHOOD? . . .	1
IS THIS MY FACE I SEE IN THE GLASS? . . .	2
HER FIRST SMILE WAS FOR DADDY . . .	3
HOW EAGERLY WE WAIT	4
THIS CHILD I HOLD IN MY ARMS	5
HER LITTLE BODY LOOKS SO HELPLESS . . .	6
BABY FUSSED ABOUT HER FOOD	7
BABY HAS LATELY DISCOVERED HER HANDS	8
BABY, DO YOU KNOW, I WONDER	9
I FEEL THE SPECIAL SOFTNESS OF MY ARMS .	10
CHUBBY FACE AND DIMPLED ARMS	11
CHILD, I HAD SUCH NEED OF YOU	12
I WONDER WHAT MY BABY THINKS	13
THIS TINY HOUSE OF FLESH	14
I WAS LONELY AND COLD	15
SHE SITS ON THE FLOOR	16
WHAT A SPLUTTER	17
BABY, WHY DO I LOVE YOU SO?	18
OH DAY OF DAYS!	19

	<i>Page</i>
THESE FIRST DAYS OF WALKING!	20
BABY STOOD BESIDE ME ON MY CHAIR . .	21
AH, 'TIS SWEET TO SEE MY TWO TOGETHER .	22
LITTLE INQUISITIVE TODDLER	23
WE WERE SO OLD, HUSBAND AND I	24
I LIKE TO WATCH HER GROW	25
MY CHILD HAS GONE TO SLEEP	26
HER HAIR WHICH WAS BLACK IS WHITE NOW	27
WE ARE SO CLOSE	28
HER THICK CHESTNUT HAIR CURLS SOFTLY .	29
IT IS COLD OUTSIDE TO-NIGHT	30
ALL DAY LONG SHE ASKS ME QUESTIONS .	31
THERE IS NO ROOM FOR WEARINESS	32
IT'S HARD FOR ME TO WORK	33
I SOMETIMES WATCH HER FATHER'S FACE .	34
OH, WHAT A ROMP I HAVE HAD WITH MY CHILD	35
I WONDERED WHY THE FLAKES OF SNOW .	36
HER CHUBBY FACE AND DIMPLED ARMS . .	37
THERE'S SUNSHINE IN HER WEALTH OF CHESTNUT HAIR	38

	<i>Page</i>
SOMETIMES WHEN MY CHILD SITS HERE . . .	39
THE BIG SOFT FLAKES OF SNOW	40
DO YOU KNOW HOW SOMETIMES IN MARCH .	41
IT SEEMS TO ME A MOTHER'S PART	42
SHE CAME AND NESTLED IN MY ARMS . . .	43
"LITTLE MOTHER, LITTLE MOTHER!" . . .	44
SHE LOOKS FRAIL	45
SHE KNOWS WHERE ALL THE WILD FLOWERS GROW	46
WHEN I WENT FOR THE GOOD-NIGHT KISS JUST NOW	47
IT IS STRANGE THAT MY CHILD SHOULD NOT CARE FOR HER DOLLS	48
TO-DAY I TOOK MY CHILD TO WALK	49
MY CHILD CAME RUNNING INTO MY ROOM .	50
"THE BEAUTIFUL BIG LADY"	52
MY CHILD BROUGHT ME POSIES TO-DAY . .	53
I LOOK AT MY CHILD	54
"LITTLE MOTHER, COME AND SEE"	55
I CAME ACROSS HER UNAWARE ONE DAY . .	56
I FOUND MY CHILD IN MY ROOM	58

	<i>Page</i>
THIS MORNING I WAS WAKENED	59
"HOW PRETTY YOU ARE, LITTLE MOTHER"	60
TO-DAY I WAS ILL	61
THE WALLS ARE A DELICATE TINT	62
SHE CAME IN SWINGING HER HAT IN HER HAND	63
I SCOLDED MY CHILD LAST NIGHT	64
SHE SAT IN MY BIG ARM CHAIR	65
WHEREVER SHE GOES	66
SHE'S GONE TO PAY A VISIT	67
TO-DAY SHE CAME TO ME	68
MY CHILD HAS GONE AWAY TO SCHOOL	69

MY CHILD

MY CHILD



HAT is this marvel of
motherhood?
Who shall say?
When this little bundle
first was put
Into the curve of my arm,
My thoughts, my feelings,
My emotions—
How could I describe them?
Why should I try?
Mothers know.

S this my face I see in the glass?
Are these my cheeks, round and
pink,
My eyes, laughing and blue,
And my mouth with an upward curve?

When last I looked I was old and haggard,
With sallow cheeks and cynical lips
And eyes that were cold like glass.

I have grown young by magic.
The magician was my child.

NER first smile was for her daddy.
It came about like this:
We both bent over her crib,
Still only half believing
That she was really ours.
She was looking up at us
With a stolid nonchalant air.
Then her eyes met her father's;
They softened as with understanding
Of his kinship,
The little lips curved inward on her gums
And parted in a smile.



OW eagerly we wait
From week's end to week's end
To know how much our baby
gains

In weight.

She is wrapped in a towel

And laid in the basket,

And then her father fusses

With the scales.

It always seems to me

He is so very slow;

But every week we find she weighs

Several ounces more.



HIS child I hold in my arms

Is no stranger.

Somewhere in some vague dim
past,

That memory strives to brighten,

My arms have held this tiny form,

My hands have stroked these curls.

These little lips I have taught to speak,

These feet I have taught to walk,

These wide brown eyes that look into mine

Are filled with a love that is not new.

Does she remember, I wonder?



HER little body looks so helpless,
Lying in my arms.
Will she one day be a woman?
Her little hands beat uselessly in air.
Will they become clever and deft,
Fashioning beautiful work?
Her little feet seem made
Only for my kisses.
Will they ever walk?

ABY fussed about her food,
Fretted at her dressing,
Tossed the toys that we gave her
From her in disgust,
And when we made her laugh—
Against her will—
She broke off in a whine
Of irritation.
Now what do you suppose it was
That made her feel so cross?
A lovely, weeny, teeny, pearly tooth.



ABY has lately discovered her hands.

She holds them up before her face,

Turns them in every possible way

While she looks and looks,

Serious and puzzled.

When they come together,

As by accident,

She coos and squirms and laughs,

And straightway forgets them.

BABY, do you know, I wonder,
How your mother loves you?
How her every thought of you
Is full of humble pride?
How she gives her very self
To care for you,
How her life would be as nought
To lose for you?



FEEL the special softness of my
arms

When I hald my child.

No touch could be too gentle

For her beauty.

My love that sheds its rays of joy around
her,

Is strong and tender

For her protection.



HUBBY face and dimpled arms,
Little feet that kick in air,
Eyes that are too big,
Nose that is no nose at all,
Little pursed up lips
That suddenly break in a smile.
Why should the smile make my baby
bashful,
Or is she coy,
That she turns on her pillow,
Hiding her face?



CHILD, I had such need of you.

Before you came I lived a dreary
life

Of loneliness—

Loneliness interspersed with agony

Of longing.

Oh, my hungry heart, my aching arms!

The pain that raged here in my breast

For the touch of your little head!

The choking tears that rose in my throat

When I saw mothers

With their children!

Then out of God's wonder

You came.

And all the pain was changed to joy;

Tears were changed to laughter,

Longing to satisfaction.

And now my life has become a song

Of love and praise to Him

Who gave me you.



WONDER what my baby thinks
When her wide brown eyes
Stare at me with such intensity,
When no spontaneous smile
Answers mine,
But she only stares.
Why do I seem to be aware
Of every fault I ever had?
Is my soul an open book
For her to read?



HIS tiny house of flesh
Contains a soul,
A soul whose worth of greatness
I do not know.
But as it is given to me
To care for the little body
While it grows,
So I must nurture the soul,
Giving it scope for life
And freedom for expression.



WAS lonely and cold,
Shutting out the life of light
around me.

All the gladness of the world

I felt as bitterness.

And then my lovely child

Was put into my arms

To teach me.

She came so straight from God

My eyes were opened to His closeness

And to the wonder of His gifts.

The sky I see, the air I breathe,

The very food I eat,

And all the people that I know

Are sent from Him.

Yet all these things are just the same

As they were before.

I wonder how I could have been

So deaf and blind.



HE sits on the floor,
A round little ball,
Surrounded on all sides by
cushions.

She makes little gurgling sounds
Of laughter at the games
We play with her
Or with her toys.
Sometimes she loses her balance
And gets engulfed in a cushion.
To her that always seems to be
The greatest joke of all.

HAT a splutter,
What a splashing,
When baby has her bath!

I hear her jabber,
I hear her gurgle
In pure delight.
I hear the nurse's voice
Gently reproving,
And then I see an image of my child
Chewing her sponge.



ABY, why do I love you so?

Other women have babies,

Yet I am sure that no one ever
loved a child

As I love you.

Other babies have laughing eyes

And dimpled bodies and coy ways,

Yet I have never seen one half as sweet
as you.

It must be that I love you so

Because you are my own.



H day of days!

Her little lips have learned to
shape

The word most magical

In all the language.

She sat upon my knees

And looked at me with a searching gaze

That probed my very soul.

Then she smiled

And lisped that word—

“Mother.”



THESE first days of walking!
How many falls and bumps
They bring to my child.

They hurt me worse than they do her
I'm sure.

For she never seems to mind,
She simply tumbles down,
Gets up laughing,
And starts again.

ABY stood beside me on my chair
And rained wet kisses on my
face—

Cheeks and eyes and nose and chin.

When I tried to escape,

She grew more insistent.

She did not smile, she only kissed—

Kissed and kissed and kissed me.

H, 'tis sweet to see my two to-
gether—
Father and child.

Baby sits upon his knee
And coos,
Or talks in her unworded jargon
About his hands, his watch, his buttons
Or his tie.
And sometimes with a quick impulse
She clambers to her feet
And strokes his hair.



LITTLE inquisitive toddler,
Peeping into every corner,
Opening every drawer and cupboard,
Strewing contents on the floor,
What are you looking for
That you never find?

WE were so old, husband and I;
And now we live again in
youth and beauty

With our child.

I've watched his drooping shoulders
straighten,

His hardened mouth relax,

And when he looks across at me,

With eyes as soft as in the days

Of our first love,

I seem to know he sees in me

As great a change.



LIKE to watch her grow,

My lovely child.

There's a place on the nursery
wall

Where we mark her height

On the first of each month.

Sometimes the last mark is far below,

Sometimes it's rather close,

But the trend is always upward

As my little darling grows

From a baby into a girl.



Y child has gone to sleep.
Her eager searching eyes are
closed,
Her gold-tinged hair spreads out upon her
pillow
And one curl falls across her cheek,
Touching her tiny chin.
Her breath has grown so low and still,
I stoop to see if she is really breathing.
A smile just parts her rose-red lips,
As though she listened,
In the hush that surrounds her,
To angels singing.



HER hair which was black is white
now,

It falls in curls of silk
Over her temples and ears.
Her cheeks are a delicate pink
Of velvet that once was satin.
Her mouth, with its easy smile,
Retains its firmness still.
Her eyes, most wonderful of all,
Are bright and keen, yet mellowed
With a glorious light of love
And understanding.
Poise is expressed in her bearing—
A spirit undefiled by trouble.
Ah, if I were like *my* mother,
Gentle and strong and wise,
I might be all a mother should be
To my child.

E are so close,
My child and I,
I seem to know her every
thought

And she my very feeling.
She never has a tiny pain
But I must have it too,
And when she is happy,
As mostly she is,
No cloud can blur my sky.

ER thick chestnut hair curls softly
Below her ears, where it's cut.
And when she laughs
And tosses her head,
The sunlight touches the strands where
they curve
And finds itself reflected.

IT is cold outside to-night.
I hear the wind and icy rain
Beating against the windows.
But here within my love pervaded home
'Tis warm and snug and cozy.
He whom I love is sitting deep in his big
chair,
Reading and smoking
While I write.
Overhead I hear a moving to and fro,
A drop of little shoes,
Which tells me that my child
Is being put to bed.



ALL day long she asks me questions:

“Mother, what is this” or “that”?

And “Mother, why is it so?”

What and why and how she asks

From morning until night.

Oftentimes I find myself

At a loss for answers,

As when she asks me why the hen

Does not cock-a-doo.



HERE is no room for weariness
In my child's presence.
Her laughing spirits bubble up
And overflow,
Making all things merry.
Care or strife
Disappear into nothingness
With her coming.

IT'S hard for me to work
When my child is here
In my room.

It always seems a waste of time to try;
For I feel a greater work
Than aught that I could write
Is being done,
When we talk and grow and learn—
We two together.



SOMETIMES watch her father's
face

When her cool refreshing laughter
Echoes through the house.
He never says a word,
But I see two tiny lines
Show at the side of his eyes,
Which narrow in loving pride,
And a softness of expression
Subtly creeps into his features,
Tempering his look of strength
With gentleness.



H, what a romp I have had with
my child

On the nursery floor.

We played at 'bear' and 'dog' and 'horse'
And 'elephant' and 'tiger.'

When I grew exhausted

And sat down in a chair,

Even then she would not let me rest.

She jumped up on my lap,

Tickled me and pulled my hair,

Teased me in all sorts of ways.

Had she been another's child

In place of mine,

Would I have been annoyed

Instead of pleased?



WONDERED why the flakes of
snow

Seemed in such a hurry,
As they jostled one another
In a merry chase
From the sky.
I looked from my window to see
Whether I could find
What attracted them.
There in the garden below,
On a carpet of white,
Standing with face upraised,
Smiling in eager joy,
Was my child.
The happy flakes that reached her
Nestled in her hair,
On her shoulders, on her face,
In her little outstretched hands;
While all the others made for her
A fairy playing ground.

ER chubby face and dimpled arms,
Her eyes and nose and mouth
have changed
Since the days of babyhood.
Her little form has grown so tall,
Her face—can I describe it?
The forehead's high, the mouth is sweet
Like her father's.
And in her eyes there is a world
Of inner truth—
Of love and wisdom.



HERE'S sunshine in her wealth
of chestnut hair,
There's sunshine in her gold-
brown eyes.

There's sunshine in her smile—

That rare illuminating smile.

There's sunshine in the way

Her little dancing feet

Touch the ground.

Her very presence radiates

A sunshine warm and bright.



SOMETIMES when my child sits
here
At my knee,
And I look into her eager upturned face
The while she asks me questions
Or prattles of her play,
I wonder why this blessing came to me.
I feel my own unworthiness
And am doubtful of my wisdom
To guide her in life's way.
But when I pray,
I realize
She is God's child,
Not mine,
And He will lead us both.



THE big soft flakes of snow
Were falling fast,
Making the trees and grass

A fairyland of white.

My child insisted that I go

Out to play with her.

(Of course I went).

We made a man of snow

With eyes of coal—

A weird and ghostly man.

She pelted me with snowballs,

She made me run and laugh and fall,

Until I felt as young as she,

My care-free child.



O you know how sometimes in
March

There comes a lull in boister-
ous weather,

When one feels a hush—a stillness,

As though the earth were listening

With bated breath

To some new secret of life?

In such a time my child was born.

And then do you know how after the lull,

The flowers begin to shoot

And the wind begins to whistle

A joyful merry tune,

And all the world awakes

To new impelling life?

'Twas so that March my child was born,

She came on the first day of spring.

IT seems to me a mother's part
Is not to dictate or command.
Hers it is to point the way,
To guide the little feet
Along the path the child's soul knows
To its Father—God.



HE came and nestled in my arms
As I sat before the fire
In twilight.

The fitful flames made goblin forms
Upon the walls and ceiling.

I tried to tell her a story

But could find no plot that pleased

My whimsical daughter.

And so we sat and dreamed,

Both of us watching the flames.

"A penny for your thoughts," I said,

Touching her satin cheek.

Her little hand stole round my neck

And she snuggled closer.

"I was thinking that of all the stories

I ever heard or knew,

The nicest one is this—

That you and I should just sit still and
rest,

My little mother."



LITTLE mother, little mother!"

I heard her call in shrill excited
tones

From the garden.

I thought some dire disaster had occurred,
And hastened out to her.

I found her dancing round a shrub,
Clapping her little hands.

"Look, look, little mother, spring has
come!"

She cried and pointed out
Where tiny buds had burst,
Showing the first tinge of green.



HE looks frail,
But she is strong.
Let her hug you, you will see.
Watch her running like a deer,
Chasing over field and lane,
Never feeling tired.
See the freshness of the zest
That she puts in work or play.
She looks frail,
But she is strong,
She is growing, that is all.



HE knows where all the wild
flowers grow ;

She plucks the first of every
kind

And makes an offering to me.

She knows the nests of all the birds

In her woods.

Squirrels and rabbits are her friends,

The wind laughs when she passes by.

I think there is no secret of outdoors

That is not known to her—

Dear Nature's child.

HEN I went for the good-night
kiss just now,
I found my child, pyjama clad,
Sitting up in bed.
Her shoulders looked so very small,
Her face so old and wise,
I knelt and put my arms about her
While I waited for the lesson
That I knew I was to learn.

"I've sat and waited for you,
Little mother," she said,
"Because I want to say God bless you
Before I go to sleep.
Dream of birds and flowers and things—
It makes one feel so glad
In the morning time."

 T is strange that my child should
not care for her dolls.

She'd rather be outdoors,
However cold or wet the day may be.
She says she likes to see things live,
And I believe it's true
That she does really see
With her keen little eyes
The grass and the trees and the flowers
all grow.



O-DAY I took my child to walk
In the park. As usual
People turned to look at her,
But for the first time she was conscious.
A pucker came between her eyes,
Her face grew serious in thought.
Finally she said,
“Little mother, do you see
How the people look?
I think the reason must be this—
They all want little daughters.”



Y child came running into my
room,
Singing a half formed tune
That was no song.
Her sun-kissed curls
Fell over her ears
And forehead and cheeks
In happy disarray.
Her eyes, that look so deep
Below the outer seeming,
Sparkled and danced,
While wondering still
As at some new-found knowledge.

She stood before me in elfin beauty.
"Little mother," she said,
"I have been in the woods where the fairies
dance
And the flowers and the trees and the birds
all sing
In tune with the wind.

I caught a purple butterfly,
And he told me such strange things;
He told me he was my own brother.
Is he, little mother?"



HE beautiful big lady”

Children call her, half in awe
At her unmarried coldness.

To-day I took my child to see her—
Wondering.

She sat in her chair

Dignified and masterful.

I watched my child,

Who stood and looked at her a time

With half-closed eyes,

Then with that winsome grace,

Which is my child’s,

She walked up to her where she sat,

Found a badly hidden curl,

Plucked it in her fingers,

Smiled and said,

“I love you, won’t you kiss me?”



Y child brought me posies to-day,
Gathered in her woods—
A gift of errant blossoms
Kissed by the sun.
Dainty and wild they were,
Fragrant and capricious,
Natural and unpretentious.
They seemed to me to be just like
Her little self.

 LOOK at my child,
So happy and free at her play,
And I long to shield her
From every knowledge that hurts
And every sorrow and care.
But I know that such wishing is vain,
That life has its lessons for each one to
learn;
And my work is to give her the strength
and the poise
That will carry her through—
Whatever comes.



LITTLE mother, come and see
What my Uncle George has
brought me

In his pocket.

A queer little man in a queer little dress,
And such a funny face.

Uncle said he found him

In some land away across the sea.

I never saw a man like him before.

I wonder if he has a soul?"

I CAME across her unaware one day
In the woods.

I stood behind a clump of laurels
And watched and listened.

Bareheaded she was and barefooted,
While in her hand she held, as part
of her,

A bunch of yellow buttercups.

Her silvery laugh rang out
As she stooped to speak to some fairy
friend

Unseen by me.

And then she began to dance,
With hands outstretched as though she
held

The hands of other children.

Snatches of song escaped her lips
In little ripples.

Free and lithe her body swayed,
Her toes scarce touched the grass.
It was a dance I did not know,
Yet vaguely seemed to remember.

A happy sadness filled my heart
As I stealthily crept away,
Leaving her undisturbed—
My fairy child.



FOUND my child in my room
When I came from town.
She hugged and kissed me, then
she said,

“Little mother, you were gone
Such a long, long time.
I’ve looked at all the papers on your desk.
I couldn’t read them all,
But there is something I am sure
You’ve written all for me;
Because I saw where you had put
‘Child’ and ‘Little mother.’”

 HIS morning I was wakened
By a touch upon my cheek,—
A touch so light, so gentle
That I knew it could be nought
Save the slender dainty fingers
Of my child.
In her little pink pyjamas,
With bare feet and crumpled hair,
She stood beside my bed,
While a bright impatient smile
Lit her face with eagerness.
“Little mother, do get up
And see the pretty sky;
The birds and flowers are all awake,
But you are lazy, dear.”

NOW pretty you are, little
mother,"

She said to me to-day,
Admiringly.

Now I am considered to be plain
By other women.

And so I wondered what my child
Found in me of beauty—

Beauty that I lacked to others.

Then I remembered our closeness,
The love of mother and child.

How could we be aught but beautiful,
One to the other?



TO-DAY I was ill.

My child came and sat by my
side,

Stroked my hand,

Kissed my brow,

Tucked the rug about me closer,

Placed another pillow,

Smiled.

It was as though our kinship were re-
versed:

She became my little mother,

I her child.

I gave myself to her tender care,

While all around me she shed

A wondrous light of love

That healed me.



HE walls are a delicate tint,
The chairs and table white.
The little desk in the corner
Is covered with pages of lessons
(Shockingly scratched and blotted)
And drawings laboriously traced.
Books of fairy lore
Fill the little set of shelves.
Over the mantel an angel of bronze
Hangs suspended,
Holding a globe of light ;
While through the broad uncurtained win-
dow
The sunshine streams.
Flitting about the room,
Like a butterfly,
Is its little mistress—
My child.



HE came in swinging her hat in
her hand;

Her feet were bare,
Her dress was torn,
Her hair stood out and up and down
In tangled mad confusion,
While on her lips was a dreaming smile,
Touched with wildness.

“Where have you been, my child?” I
asked.

“Oh, little mother, can’t you guess?
I’ve been to romp with the wind,
And he played such pranks on me!
We ran a race—
Oh, what a race!
But I fell down and then he won.
Wasn’t it a pity, dear?”

 SCOLDED my child last night
For a fault she did not commit.
And now I wonder

Who suffered the most,

She or I.

She stood very straight,

But she quivered with pain,

And her brown eyes widened

In hurt surprise.

"Little mother," she said,

And her voice was low,

"I think you have been mistaken,

Or else you have not understood."

How keen the accusation

That can come from the lips of a child

In words of love!



HE sat in my big arm chair,
Spelling out the words
Of a fairy tale,
Asking every now and then
The meaning of some term.
Suddenly I noticed that the questions
ceased,
And looked to see the reason why.
The book lay open on her lap,
But her head had dropped—
A mass of sunlit curls—
On to the arm of the chair.

WHEREVER she goes,
This child of mine,
She carries a blessing of joy.
Sorrow cannot live in her presence;
For under her carefully chiseled features
There lies a beauty
Of spirit,
That touches people's souls.





HE'S gone to pay a visit
To her aunt.
At first I felt I couldn't bear it,
The house seemed to grow so dark
And still.
But this morning I got a letter
In her quaint dear unformed writing.
The joy it expressed
Filled my heart
And made me glad again.



O-DAY she came to me
With some trouble overbig
To her childish mind.

But when we had talked it over,
Sorted and discussed
The worth of each detail,
We found there was no trouble there at
all.

It was joy to see her face
Regain its sweet composure;
And her words were like a blessing
To my heart.

"I wonder, little mother, how other girls
can live,
For I am sure that no one has
A motherling like you."



Y child has gone away to school,
Ah me! how fast she grows.
It seems it was but yesterday
Her little golden head
Was cradled on my breast,
And she knew no life apart from me.
Now she must be taught by strangers,
Must live in new surroundings,
And make new friends.
I must stand aside
And let her learn from others.
But mine it is to give her still
That love and understanding,
That sympathy and comradeship
Which none but a mother can give.



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 015 799 555 8

